Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan
Executive
Council

Communications
Coordination
Unit

130 Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street
Regina, Canada
S4S 0B1

Government of Saskatchewan

Public Opinion Polling and Market Research

from July 1, 2000 to September 30, 2000

Additional copies available from:

Communications Coordination Unit
Executive Council
Rm. 130, Walter Scott Bldg.
3085 Albert Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B1

Phone: (306) 787-6276
Fax: (306) 787-6123

Department/Crown commissioning the work:

Executive Council

Date:	**September, 2000**
Supplier:	**Anderson/Fast & Associates, Saskatoon**
Cost:	**$22,500**

Omnibus
Provincial Public Opinion Survey

Prepared for:

Saskatchewan Executive Council
113 Legislative Building
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0B3

Submitted by:

Anderson/Fast & Associates & Associates
280B - 2600 8th Street East
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
S7H 0V7
Tel: 956-3070
Fax: 956-3663

September 2000

TABLE OF CONTENTS

September 2000

Executive Summary ..... *i*
Methodology ..... *ii*

1.0 GENERAL ISSUES 1

2.0 JUSTICE 3

3.0 HEALTH CARE 5

4.0 TOBACCO ADVERTISING & SALES 17

Appendix I Survey Instrument

Appendix II Survey Demographics

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Federal issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, federal taxes and jobs and unemployment.
- Provincial issues that Saskatchewan residents tend to be most concerned with include health care, provincial taxes, jobs and unemployment and agriculture.
- The majority of residents approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities.
- More than one third know about or have heard about police-affiliated victim services in their area; one third are also aware of what services are available to victims in their area.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents rate the quality of health care services they or their family members have received in the past 12 months as either excellent or good.
- The majority of residents rate the current level of health services provided in the province as either excellent or good.
- The large majority of Saskatchewan residents think the most important provincial health care initiatives are reducing waiting times for surgery, recruiting and retaining doctors, recruiting and retaining nurses, covering the most necessary and beneficial prescription drugs and funding the purchase of new diagnostic and treatment equipment.
- The majority of residents agree some potential long-term benefits to the province resulting from health care initiatives will include reducing the number of people on social assistance, enabling people to be productive members of society and keeping people out of the justice system by reducing criminal activity caused by addictions.
- More than two thirds of Saskatchewan residents think the most important long-term health care initiatives that the government can undertake with the objective of preventing or delaying illness are identifying and treating health problems early, ensuring a good education so people can get a good job and preventing fetal alcohol syndrome.
- The majority of residents wish they had more information about Saskatchewan's health care system; most want to know where the money goes for health care and the cost of services.
- More than three quarters of residents think that Saskatchewan has the ability to make Medicare work into the future and that it is important to make changes to the system and to make better use of the money we have.
- The majority of Saskatchewan residents support a ban on the sale and display of tobacco products in hospitals, recreational facilities and pharmacies.

METHODOLOGY

Anderson/Fast & Associates was retained by the Government of Saskatchewan to conduct the September 2000 public opinion survey with a representative sample of the Saskatchewan population. The September Omnibus Survey contains questions designed to explore public opinion regarding:

- federal issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- provincial issues of importance to Saskatchewan residents;
- the justice system;
- health care, and
- tobacco advertising and sales.

The questions for the survey were provided by Saskatchewan Executive Council and assembled into an interview format by Anderson/Fast. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure that all of the questions being asked in the interview were understood by the general public and the information being gathered addressed the public opinion research objectives.

The sample frame for this public opinion research survey was constructed to obtain complete interviews from a random sample of 1,000 households throughout Saskatchewan. To ensure proportionate representation from all areas of Saskatchewan, the province was divided into nine geographic sampling districts. Interview respondents were selected randomly from Saskatchewan telephone directories in each region using standard polling practices to ensure random selection of households and respondents. The sampling frame was also constructed to ensure proportionate representation of other important demographic characteristics evident within the provincial population such as gender, age, occupation, level of education and level of household income. This ensures that the opinions of all the various types of people who reside in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report.

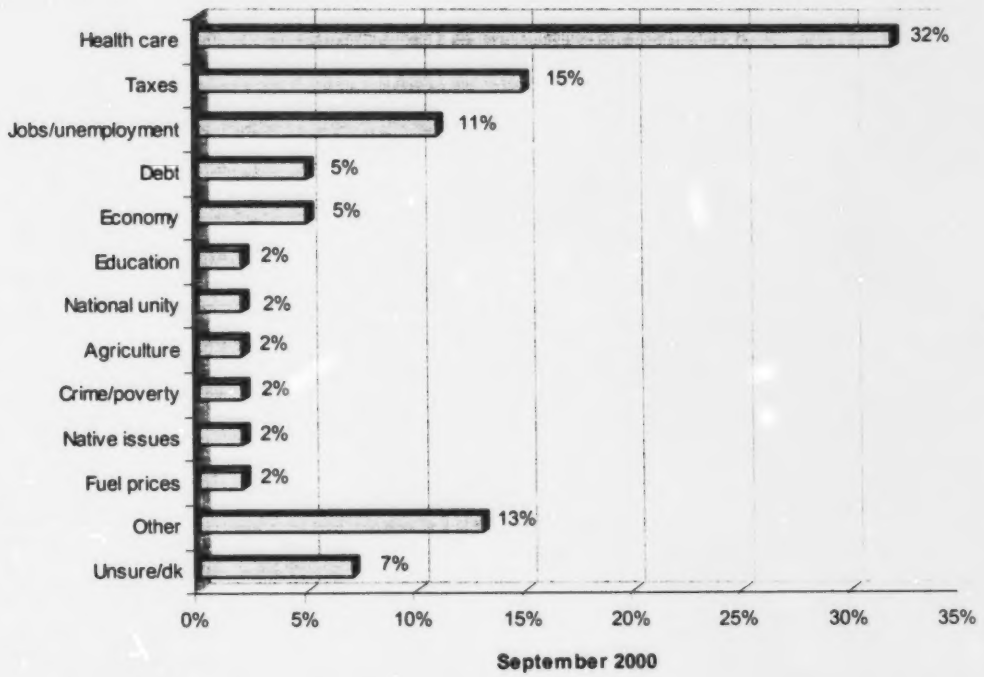
One thousand residents of the province were interviewed over an eleven day period between Monday, September 18 and Thursday, September 28, 2000. Interviews were conducted by telephone at times that were appropriate and convenient for respondents - weekdays between the hours of 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m. and weekends between the hours of 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. All interviews were conducted by Anderson/Fast's in-house public opinion interviewers using our *Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing* (CATI) call centre.

The Omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points: reliable results with low variability. Frequency charts for all public opinion issues are illustrated in this report.

Anderson/Fast designed and implemented programs to facilitate the statistical analysis of data using the industry standard SPSS computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Data checking procedures were utilized at all times to ensure accuracy of the data. We also conducted statistical tests on the demographics to check for reliability and validity of the survey data.

1.0 GENERAL ISSUES

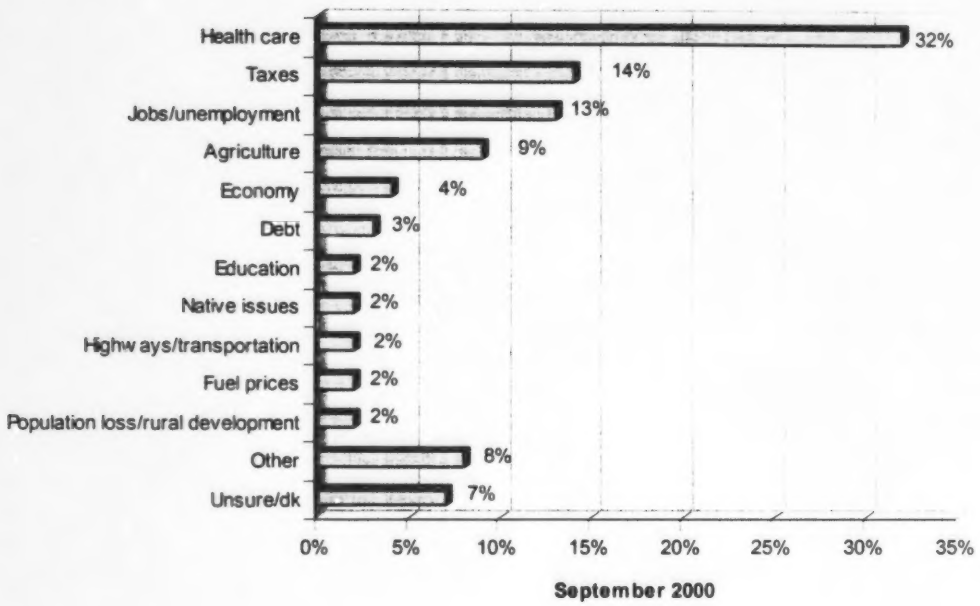
Question 1. In your opinion, what is the most important issue facing Canada today?



- According to 32% of Saskatchewan residents, the most important issue facing Canada today is the health care system. Other important issues include federal taxes (15%), jobs and unemployment (11%), the national deficit and accumulated debt (5%) and the economy (5%).

- Approximately 13% of respondents are primarily concerned with 'other' issues such as the federal government in general (4%), moral, social and religious issues (1%), children and youth (1%), the environment (1%) and social programs and welfare (1%).

Question 2. What do you think is the most important issue facing the province of Saskatchewan today?

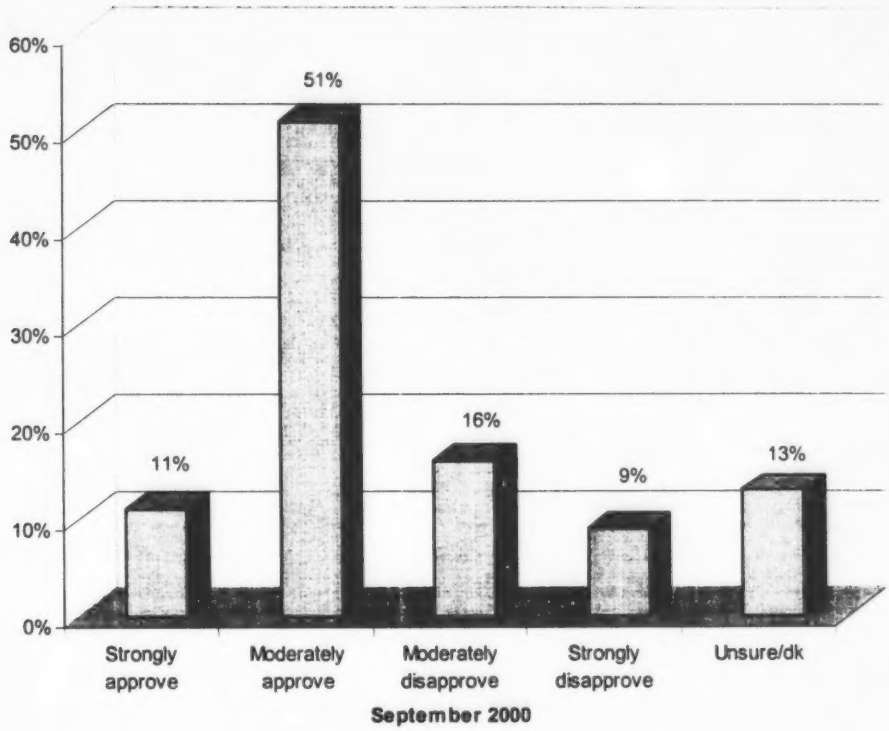


- The most important issue facing the province today, according to 32% of Saskatchewan residents, is health care. Approximately 14% of residents are primarily concerned with provincial taxes, 13% with jobs and unemployment, 9% are concerned primarily with agriculture, 4% the provincial economy and 3% of respondents are primarily concerned with the provincial debt.

- Included among 'other' important issues identified by 8% of respondents are the provincial government in general (3%), crime and poverty (1%), business and industry (1%) and children and youth (1%).

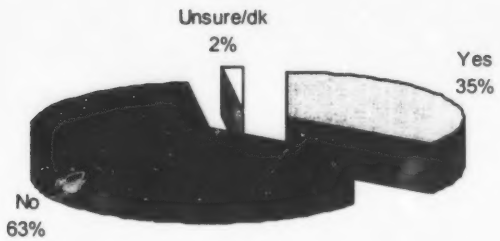
2.0 JUSTICE

Question 3. Generally speaking, do you strongly approve, moderately approve, moderately disapprove or strongly disapprove of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities?



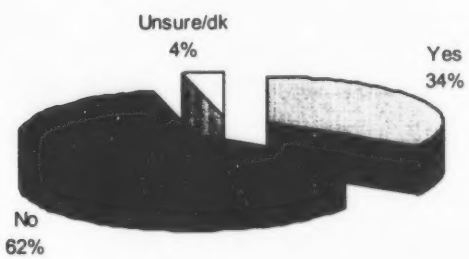
- The majority (62%) of residents approve of the way Saskatchewan's provincial government is handling the policing of communities.

Question 4. Do you know about or have you heard about police-affiliated victim services programs in your area?



- More than one-third (35%) of residents know about or have heard about police-affiliated victim services in their area.

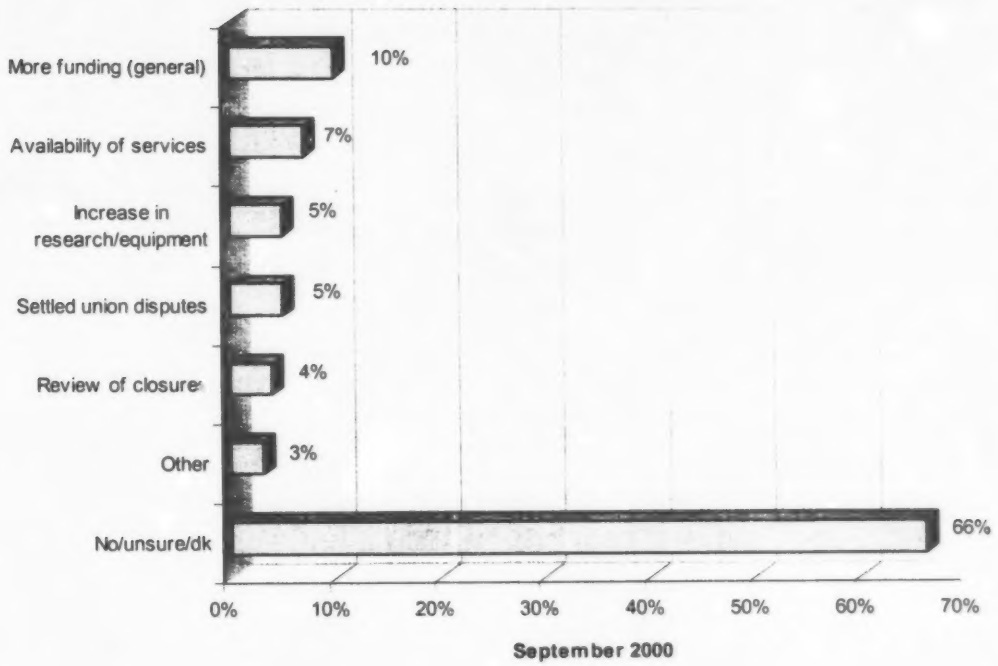
Question 5. Are you aware of what services are available to victims in your area?



- More than one-third (34%) are also aware of what services are available to victims in their area.

3.0 HEALTH CARE

Question 6. What do you believe is the most positive thing that has happened to health care in Saskatchewan in the past two years?



- Approximately 10% of Saskatchewan residents indicate more funding in general is the most positive thing to happen to health care in the province in the past two years. About 7% say there has been an increase in the availability of services, 5% mention an increase in research and equipment and another 5% think the most positive thing that has happened to heath care in Saskatchewan is settling the union disputes.

Question 7. I'm going to list some provincial health care initiatives in Saskatchewan. Some are existing initiatives already underway, others are potential initiatives that are being considered. Please tell me how important each one is to you and your family on a scale between 1 and 10, where 10 – the highest number you can choose – means you think it's very important and 1 – the lowest number you can choose – means you think it's not important at all.

	Not important (1-4)	Neutral (5-7)	Important (8-10)
Reducing waiting times for surgery	3%	13%	84%
Recruiting and retaining doctors	3%	16%	81%
Recruiting and retaining nurses	3%	17%	80%
Covering the most necessary and beneficial prescription drugs	4%	21%	75%
Funding the purchase of new diagnostic and treatment equipment	3%	24%	73%
Improving access to health care in rural Saskatchewan	6%	25%	69%
Lobbying for more federal funding	6%	25%	69%
Spending more money into the health care system	6%	25%	69%
Funding research aimed at finding cures/providing better treatment	5%	29%	66%
A major review of the entire health care system in order to make recommendations to make it sustainable into the future	11%	25%	64%
Working with health districts to get deficits under control	6%	32%	62%
Funding the use of nurses in an expanded role such as primary health care or advanced clinical nurses	6%	33%	61%
Creating programs that help children in their very early years of life	11%	31%	58%
Funding programs that prevent the spread of contagious diseases	8%	35%	57%
Reducing waiting times for non-surgical services	8%	37%	55%
Improving air and road ambulance emergency transport of patients	8%	39%	53%
Expanded water quality testing	11%	37%	52%
Funding programs that treat or prevent substance abuse	10%	41%	49%
Informing people about health care issues, services and health spending	13%	40%	47%
Funding voluntary agencies that support research and educate the public on major diseases	11%	46%	43%
Funding community-based organizations to offer programs that support individuals such as new or very young mothers	12%	45%	43%
Funding education and advertising campaigns to help people develop healthier lifestyles	20%	42%	38%
Building new health care facilities	36%	39%	25%

- The large majority of Saskatchewan residents think the most important (rank of 8 - 10) provincial health care initiatives are reducing waiting times for surgery (84%), recruiting and retaining doctors (81%), recruiting and retaining nurses (80%), covering the most necessary and beneficial prescription drugs (75%) and funding the purchase of new diagnostic and treatment equipment (73%).

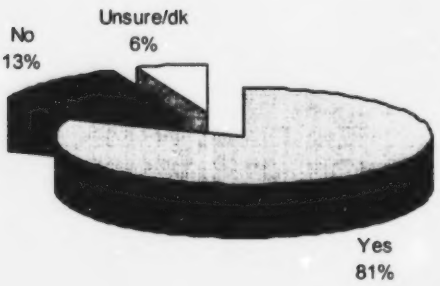
- Health care initiatives that Saskatchewan residents give lower priority to include building new health care facilities (25%), funding education and advertising campaigns to help people develop healthier lifestyles (38%), funding community-based organizations to offer programs that support individuals such as new or young mothers (43%) and funding voluntary agencies that support research and educate the public on major diseases (43%).

Question 8. Health care initiatives designed to delay the onset of health problems may have potential long-term benefits to the province. I'm going to read some of these potential benefits and I'd like you to tell me how much you agree using a scale between 1 and 10, where 10 means you strongly agree and 1 means you strongly disagree that these benefits would occur.

	Disagree (1-4)	Neutral (5-7)	Agree (8-10)
Reduce the number of people on social assistance	15%	25%	60%
Enable people to be productive members of society, furthering the province's economic development goals	9%	33%	58%
Keep people out of the justice system by reducing criminal activity caused by the long-term effects of drug, alcohol or gambling addictions	12%	33%	55%
Reduce demand for hospital or nursing home care	29%	38%	33%
Save money which enables redirection of funding to other government priorities	29%	42%	29%

- The majority of Saskatchewan residents agree (rank of 8 - 10) some potential long-term benefits to the province resulting from health care initiatives will include reducing the number of people on social assistance (60%), enabling people to be productive members of society (58%) and keeping people out of the justice system by reducing criminal activity caused by addictions (55%).

Question 9. Do you feel that strategies aimed at preventing or delaying illness have merit?



- The large majority (81%) of Saskatchewan residents think that strategies aimed at preventing or delaying illness have merit.

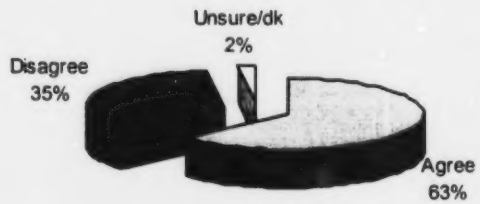
Question 10. Over the long-term there are various other health care initiatives that the government can undertake with the objective of preventing or delaying illness. We want to get an idea of which ones people in Saskatchewan think might have the best potential to do this. I'm going to read some of these initiatives and I would like you to tell me how much potential you think each one has for actually preventing or delaying illness in the population of the province, again, using a scale between 1 and 10 – where 10 means you think the initiative has excellent potential for preventing or delaying illness and 1 means you think it is unlikely to have any potential at all.

	Low potential (1-4)	Neutral (5-7)	High potential (8-10)
Identifying and treating health problems early, before they become serious	2%	14%	84%
Ensuring a good education so people can get a good job	4%	20%	76%
Preventing fetal alcohol syndrome	6%	23%	71%
Helping children "at risk" with developmental disorders like autism and deafness	4%	29%	67%
Reducing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and other infections such as HIV and hepatitis	6%	27%	67%
Promoting physical fitness/wellness	7%	30%	63%
Reducing tobacco usage	11%	26%	63%
Parenting training/nutrition	7%	32%	61%
Promoting lifestyle changes that prevent or delay diabetes in adults	7%	32%	61%
Reducing complications associated with chronic disease	5%	38%	57%
Reducing alcohol usage	12%	35%	53%
Reducing the number of people with gambling problems	18%	41%	41%

- More than two thirds of Saskatchewan residents think the most important (rank of 8 - 10) long-term health care initiatives that the government can undertake with the objective of preventing or delaying illness are identifying and treating health problems early (84%), ensuring a good education so people can get a good job (76%) and preventing fetal alcohol syndrome (71%).

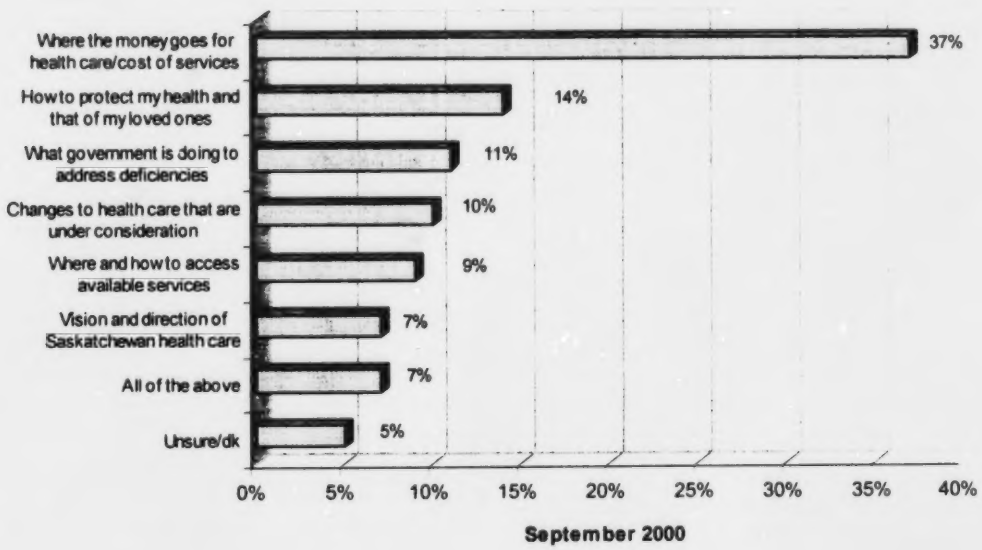
- Although the majority of residents generally think there is high potential for all initiatives they are somewhat less supportive of those initiatives that have emphasis on prevention.

Question 11. I'm going to read you a statement and then ask you to indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are unsure: I wish I had more information about Saskatchewan's health care system.



- The majority (63%) of residents wish they had more information about Saskatchewan's health care system.

Question 12. Please indicate the topic you would most like to know more about:

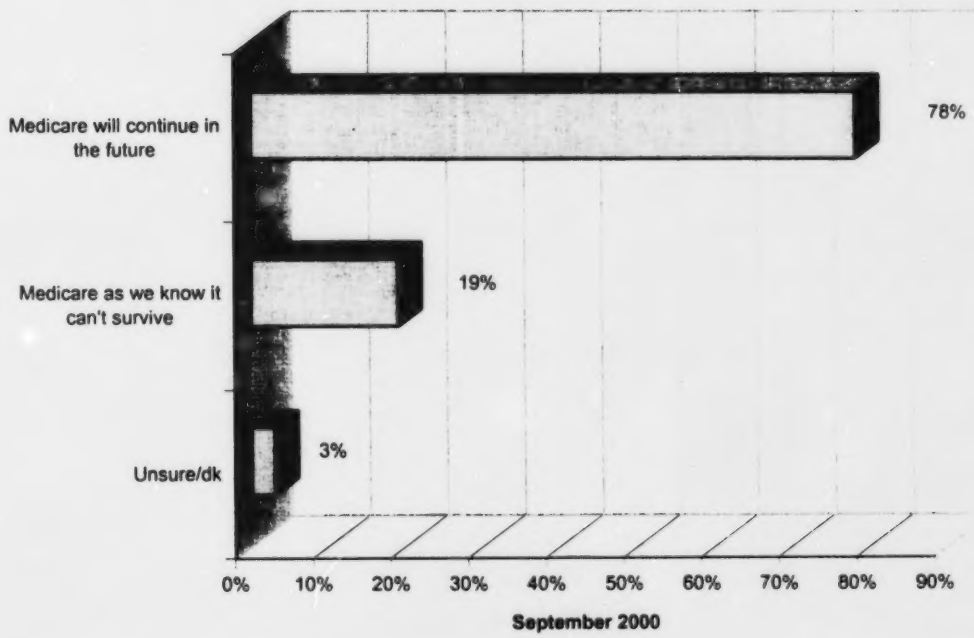


- More than one third (37%) of those residents who would like to know more about Saskatchewan's health care system indicate they would like to know where the money goes for health care and the cost of services (24% of all residents).

Question 13. Choose the statement that most closely matches your views.

Would you say that:

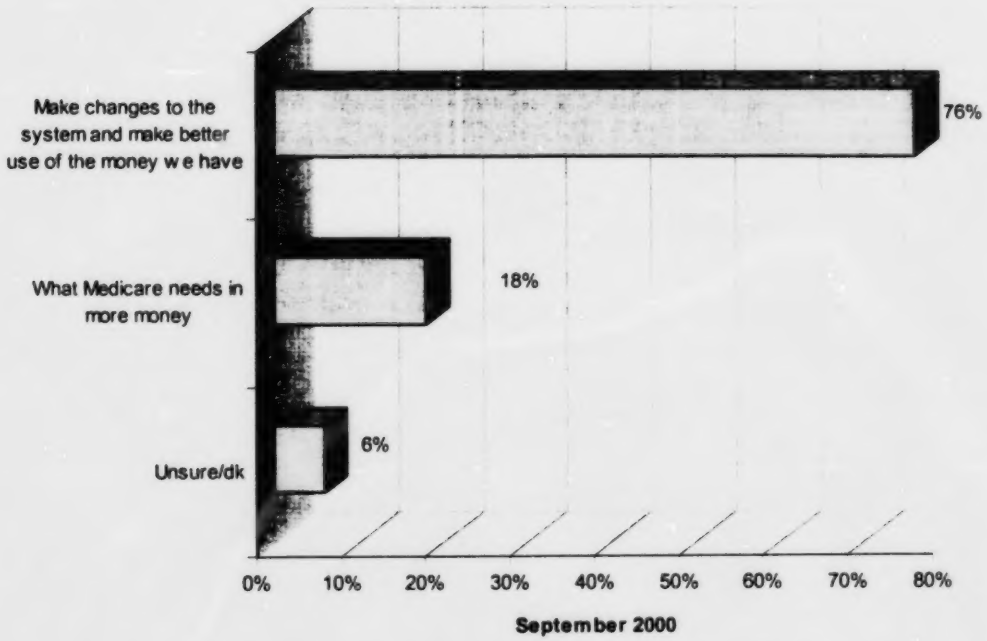
1) Medicare as we know it can't survive. It's time to admit that we can't afford publicly funded health care for everyone. OR
2) Medicare will continue in the future. Saskatchewan has the ability to make it work.
3) Unsure/dk



- More than three-quarters (78%) of residents think that Saskatchewan has the ability to make Medicare work into the future.
- Few people believe that it's time to admit that we cannot afford publicly funded health care for everyone. One in five (19%) are of the opinion that Medicare as we know it cannot survive.

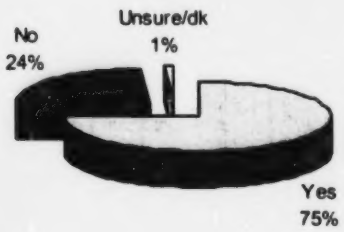
Would you say that:

1) What Medicare needs is more money. OR
2) More money is not the most important thing. It is more important to make changes to the system and make better use of the money we have.
3) Unsure/dk



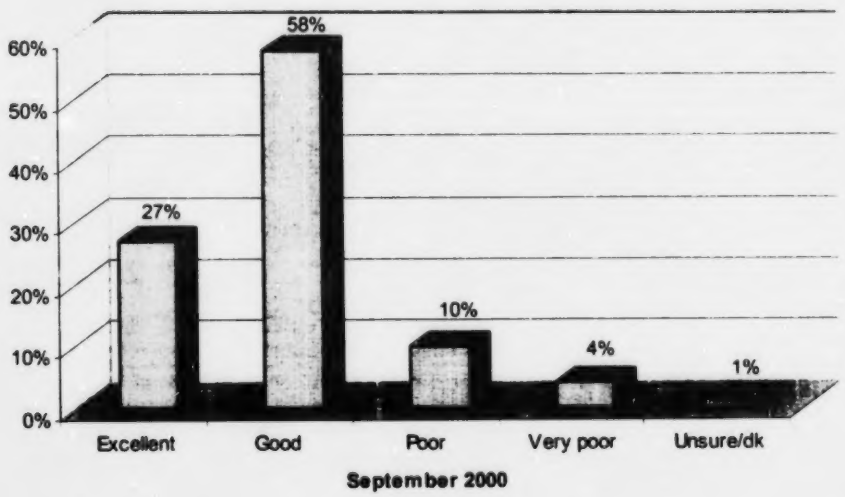
- More than three-quarters (76%) also think that more money is not the most important thing; it is more important to make changes to the system and make better use of the money we have.
- Few people are of the opinion that what Medicare needs is more money. Approximately 18% think that what Medicare needs is more money.

Question 13a. Have you or any member of your immediate family received any health services from the health system in the past 12 months?



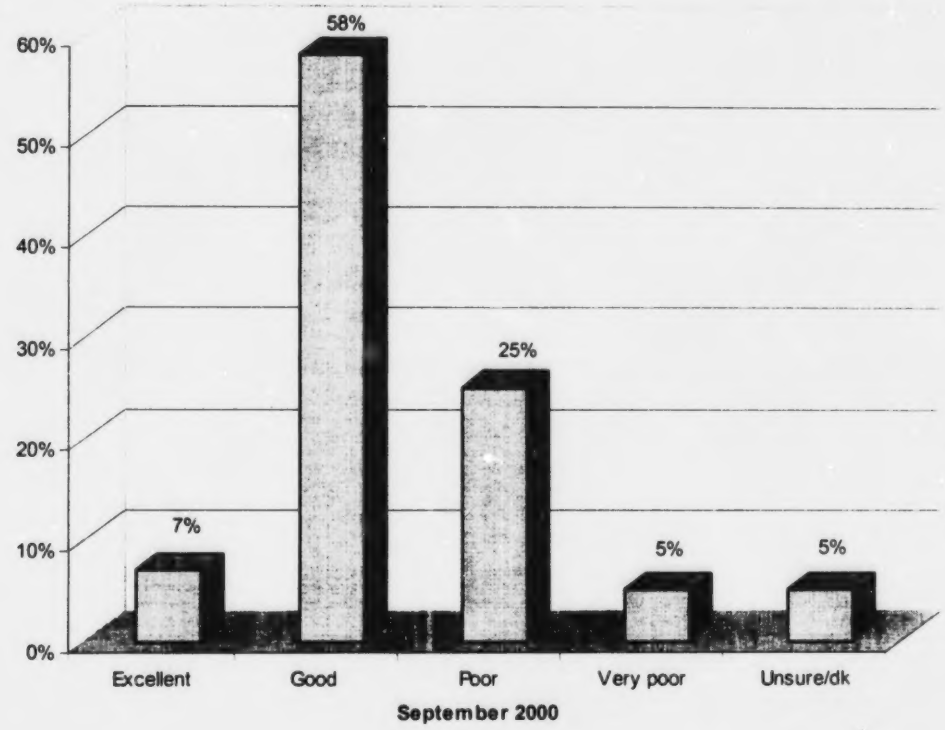
- Three-quarters (75%) of Saskatchewan residents indicate they or a family member have received health care services in the past 12 months.

Question 13b. How would you rate the quality of health services you yourself or your family members have received in the past 12 months?



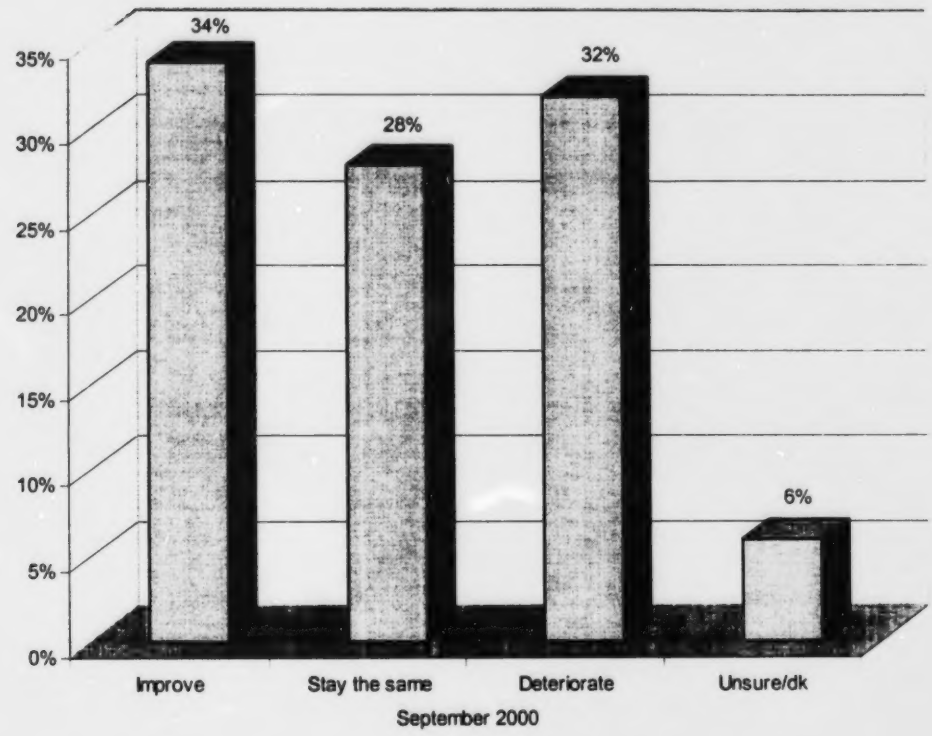
- The majority of residents (85%) rate the quality of health care services they or their family members have received in the past 12 months as either excellent or good.

Question 14. Overall, how would you rate the current level of health services provided in the province?



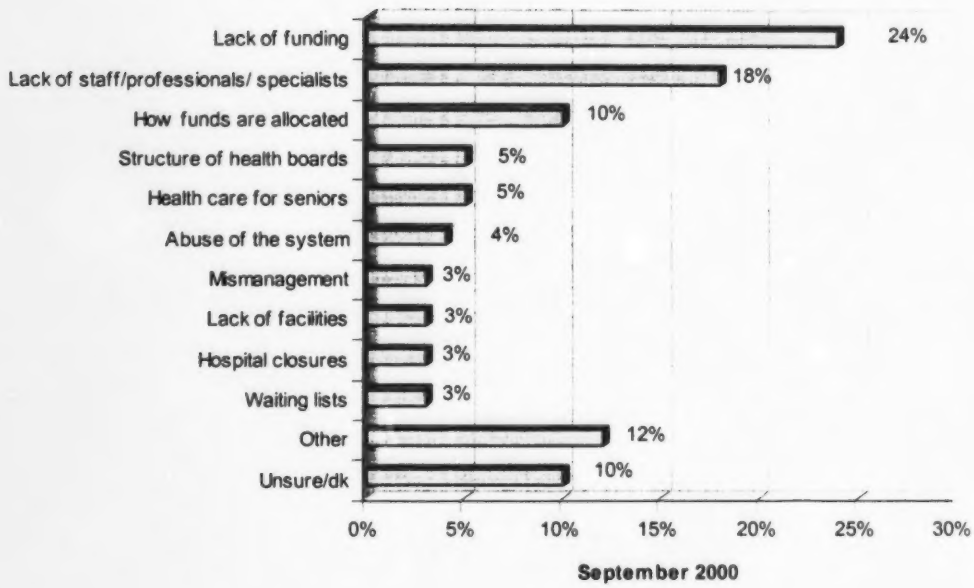
- The majority (65%) of Saskatchewan residents rate the current level of health services provided in the province as either excellent or good.

Question 15. Over the next 10 years, do you expect the health services in Saskatchewan will...



- The majority of residents (62%) expect the health services in Saskatchewan will improve or stay the same over the next 10 years. The percentage of residents who expect health services to deteriorate in the next 10 years (32%) is roughly equal to the percentage which expect these services to improve (34%).

Question 16. Thinking about the future, what do you think is the major problem facing health care in Saskatchewan?

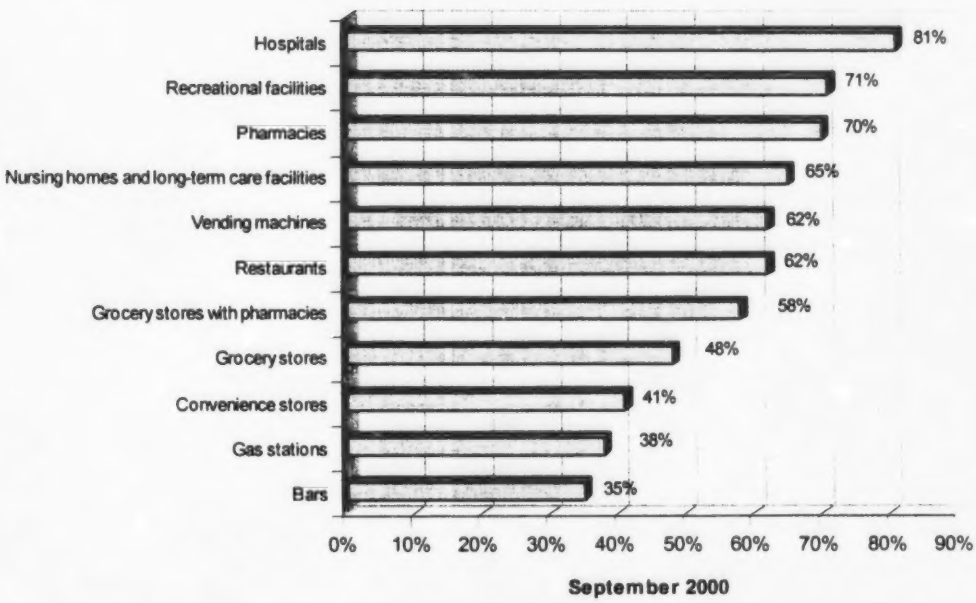


- One-quarter (24%) of Saskatchewan residents think a lack of funding will be the major problem facing health care in the future, 18% think there will a lack of professionals and 10% think how funds are allocated will be the major problem in the future.

- Included among 'other' major problems facing the future of health care in Saskatchewan identified by 12% of respondents are the provincial government in general (3%), education and awareness (2%), quality of health care (1%), cutbacks (1%), two-tiered health care (1%) and a small tax base (1%).

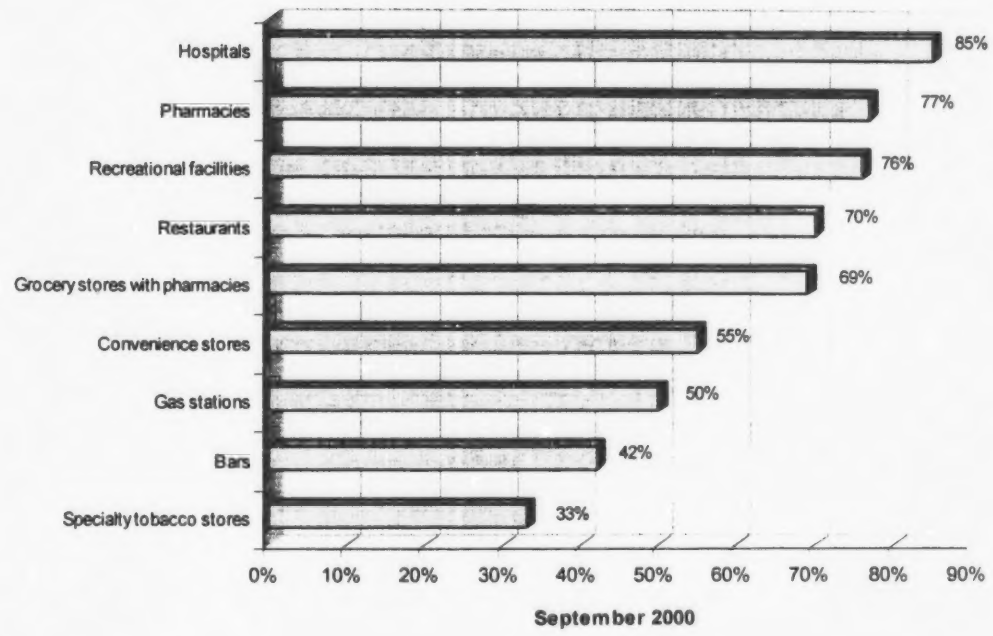
4.0 TOBACCO ADVERTISING & SALES

Question 17. Currently, there are few legal restrictions on where tobacco can be sold. Lately, there has been discussion about more restrictions on the sale of tobacco. Would you support a ban on the sale of tobacco in the following places?



- More than two thirds of Saskatchewan residents would support a ban on the sale of tobacco in hospitals (81%), recreational facilities (71%) and pharmacies (70%).
- The majority would support a ban on the sale of tobacco in nursing homes and long-term care facilities (65%), vending machines (62%), restaurants (62%) and grocery stores with pharmacies on the premises (58%).

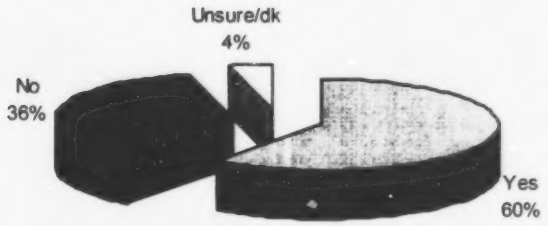
Question 18. Would you support a ban on the display of tobacco products and advertising materials in the following locations?



- More than three quarters of Saskatchewan residents would support a ban on the display of tobacco products and advertising materials in hospitals (85%), pharmacies (77%) and recreational facilities (76%).

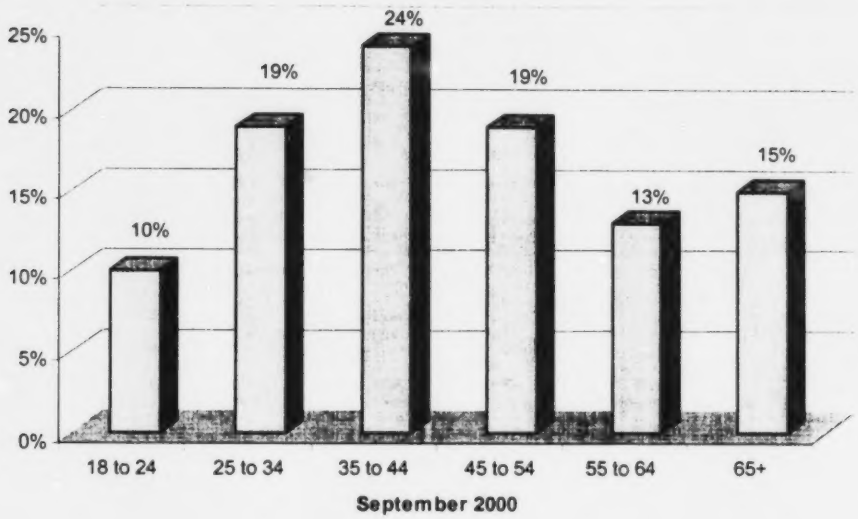
- The majority would support a ban on the display of tobacco products and advertising materials in restaurants (70%), grocery stores with pharmacies on the premises (69%) and convenience stores (55%).

Question 19. The current legal age to purchase tobacco is 18. Are you in favour of raising the legal age to 19?



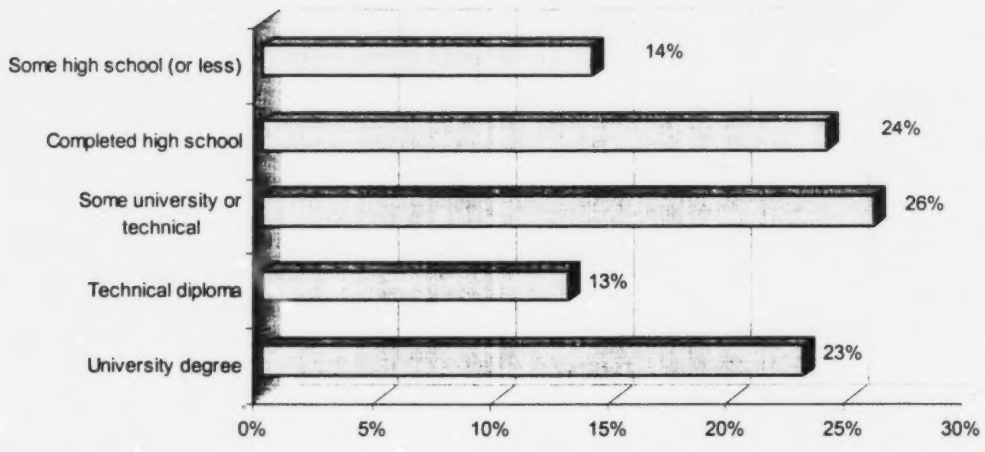
- The majority (60%) of Saskatchewan residents are in favour of raising the legal age to purchase tobacco to 19.

Survey sample age distribution



September 2000

Survey sample education distribution



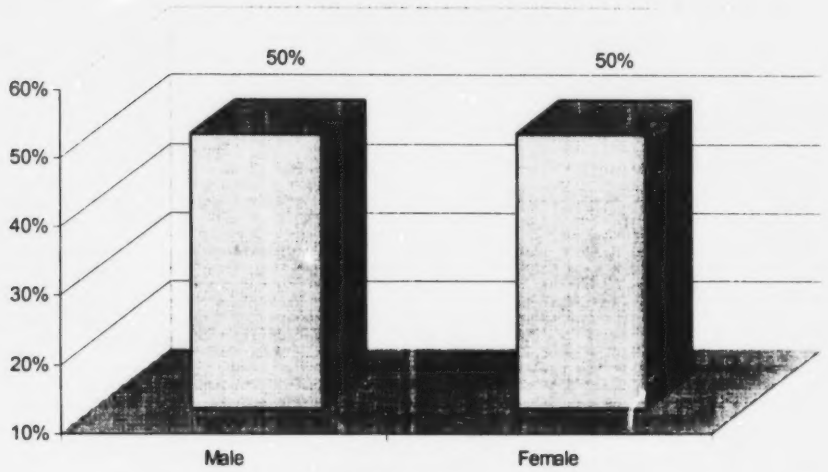
September 2000

APPENDIX II SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

The omnibus public opinion sample frame is constructed to facilitate proportionate representation of various demographic characteristics evident within the province of Saskatchewan. This ensures that opinions of all the various types of residents in Saskatchewan are proportionately represented in the statistical measurements documented in this report. The demographic distributions from the survey sample generally parallel the province's actual population distributions, as measured by Statistics Canada census data.

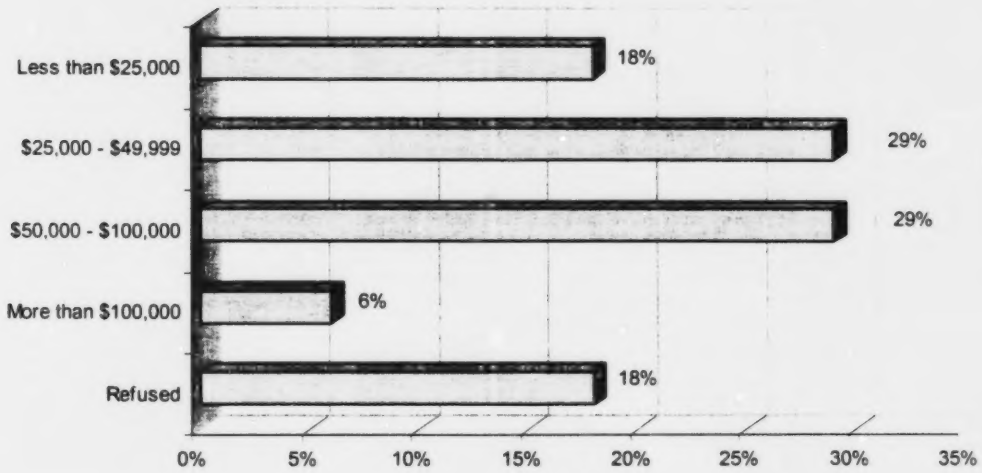
The omnibus survey sample size of 1,000 people yields public opinion measurements with a statistical level of confidence of 95 percent within an overall margin of error for the point estimates contained in this report of plus or minus 3.1 percentage points.

Survey sample gender distribution



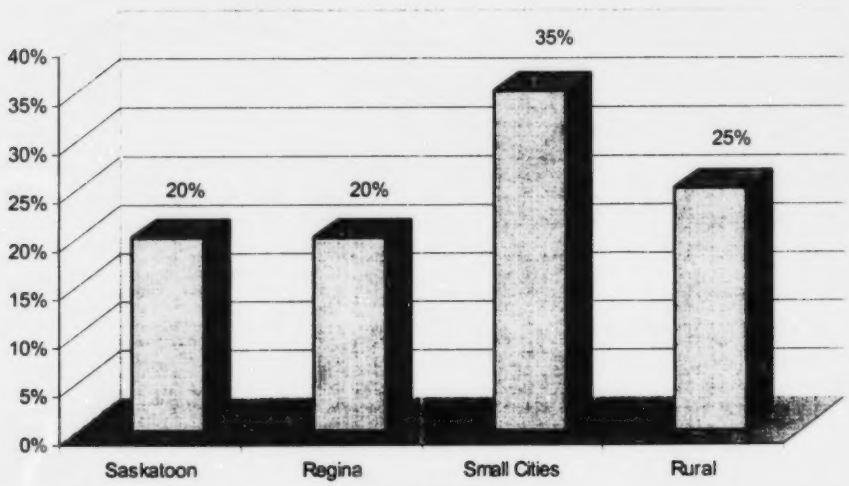
September 2000

Survey sample income distribution



September 2000

Survey sample regional distribution



September 2000

Survey sample occupation distribution